



# *Region III Report*

## Region III hosts readiness workshop, ROC exercise

With an eye on boosting region-wide response capabilities, FEMA Region III's Response and Recovery Division sponsored a Readiness Workshop from February 10-13 in Philadelphia.

The workshop, attended by regional staff, emergency support function personnel and state emergency managers, consisted of Regional Support Team (RST) overview presentations, breakout sessions of the various RST sections, and a one-day exercise. Major topics of discussion involved the implementation of the Incident Command System and the National/Federal Response Plan.

"We really wanted to make sure that our federal and state partners are aware of their responsibilities during a regional operations center (ROC) activation," said Dave Parks, Response Operations Branch Chief. "We also took this opportunity to share the lessons learned from the Hurricane Isabel response and recovery operations."

The breakout sessions accomplished several objectives. Topics ranged from standard operating procedures and Information and Planning requirements to mission assignments and action tracking.

Following the breakout sessions, a training exercise was held to test the region's readiness. The objective was to incorporate what participants had learned prior to the exercise into a terrorist attack situation. The tabletop exercise involved an explosion at City Hall in Philadelphia, requiring coordination among city, state and federal agencies.

"Anytime we hold these types of exercises, we strive to educate as well as test our current level of readiness," said Patricia Arcuri, Acting Regional Director. "I think it is very beneficial to get to know our counterparts and their roles before engaging in a real-time response effort."

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**Dave Parks, Response Operations Branch Chief**

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*An audience of more than 160 participants listens to a presentation during the Feb. 10 session of the Readiness Workshop.*



*Administration and Resource Planning staff discusses administrative procedures for ROC and field operations during the Feb. 11 breakout session as part of the Readiness workshop.*



**Readiness Workshop:** Individual Assistance Officers Eileen Fedele and Sandy Hunt strategize during the tabletop exercise.

## Debris removal summit examines Isabel efforts

Public Assistance Officers from across the country attended a Debris Removal Summit in Richmond, Va., on January 21 and 22. The summit, conducted by Regions III and IV, aimed to improve the debris removal process in the wake of Hurricane Isabel and apply those lessons nationwide.

“Our intent was to fully review the current debris removal process and develop additional guidance, if necessary,” said Mark Beto, Region III Public Assistance Officer. “We achieved that goal by deconstructing each step of the process.”

The first day consisted of presentations on the many elements of the debris removal process, including the Operations Branch structure, as well as the participants and their roles. Presentations covered all aspects of debris removal such as team development and staffing, technological considerations and contracting. Region IV gave overviews of information dissemination, eligibility determination and debris monitoring.

The summit ended with roundtable discussions, focusing on lessons learned during Hurricane Isabel.

### Did You Know?

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security will celebrate its one-year anniversary on March 1. Twenty-two federal agencies were officially transformed and realigned into a single department on March 1, 2003 to protect our homeland.

## News From Our State Partners

### *MEMA holds 5th Annual Anti-Terrorism Symposium*

The Maryland Emergency Management Agency held its 5th Annual Public Information Officers Anti-Terrorism Symposium on January 22. The purpose of this event was to prepare public information officers from Maryland public agencies to deal with a terrorist event. The symposium featured presentations on the safety and security of radioactive sources.

### *West Virginia Committee Changes Name*

The Jefferson County (West Virginia) Office of Homeland Security (JCOHS), formerly the Jefferson County Project Impact Steering Committee, has added an antiterrorism component to its already successful natural disaster programs.

“The words ‘homeland security’ were chosen for the new name because they reflect both natural and human-caused disasters,” said Barbara Miller, Program Coordinator.

Jefferson County was one of the last communities to receive a Project Impact Grant from FEMA before the successful program ended in 2001.

“We were determined to build strong relationships between governments at all levels, businesses, civic and nonprofit groups and individuals to solve disaster-related problems,” said Miller. “We have been successful in doing that, and we hope to continue.”

Jefferson County has been committed to preparing the local community for disasters as well as taking steps to prevent damage from future disasters. The JCOHS, under its former name, developed the first Multi-Jurisdictional All Hazards Risk Assessment and Mitigation Plan in the nation under the Disaster Mitigation Act of 2000 to receive FEMA approval. Also, the Jefferson County Commission adopted the committee’s Animals in Disaster Plan in 2003.

JCOHS has also developed many publications and held workshops on a variety of disaster-related subjects from the National Flood Insurance Program to basic awareness of terrorism.

## In Brief...

### ► Disaster Education CD to be released in Virginia

Virginia teachers will soon be able to use the "Disaster Resistance Library: A tool box for teachers" CD-ROM in the classroom, after years of hard work by the FEMA Mitigation Education and Outreach Branch and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The CD contains lesson plans, standards of learning, Internet links and a library of information on all forms of natural disasters and terrorism. "We would like to thank all of those who helped us see this long, complicated project through," said project leader Noah Thacker. "The best way to mitigate disaster damage is to educate people, and there is no better place to start than with school children."

### ► 2004 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program transitions to ODP

The Office for Domestic Preparedness (ODP) will administer the 2004 Assistance to Firefighters Grant Program. FEMA will continue to assist ODP during the transition. Under the program, more than \$75 million has been distributed to fire departments in the region.

State by state breakdown:

- Delaware: \$1,030,575
- Maryland: \$6,703,375
- Pennsylvania: \$44,281,361
- Virginia: \$15,162,905
- West Virginia: \$8,400,578

### ► HMGP success around the corner for Bluefield, Va.

Citizens and local leaders of Bluefield, Va. are using the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program to remove homes, businesses and government buildings from the floodplain. A short video was produced by FEMA Region III to showcase Bluefield after local officials decided to use FEMA mitigation funds to relocate homes and businesses from one of its most flood-prone streets. In the video, the FEMA mitigation officers, the mayor and the city manager speak of the positive, permanent impact HMGP will have on Bluefield.

### ► West Virginia and Virginia Disaster Field Offices close

Both the West Virginia (DR-1500) and Virginia (DR-1491) Disaster Field Offices (DFO) closed on January 19 and 23, respectively. At the time of the Virginia DFO closing, more than \$257 million in state and federal assistance had been approved. More than 93,000 people applied for assistance in 100 disaster-declared jurisdictions. In West Virginia, FEMA assistance topped \$24 million, including individual assistance and public assistance grants and U.S. Small Business Administration disaster loans.

### ► FEMA approves \$2.6 million for Virginia debris removal

FEMA has approved \$2,612,914 to help pay for debris removal in two Virginia counties as a result of Hurricane Isabel. In Surrey County, FEMA will pay \$1,305,807, or 75 percent of the project costs that totaled \$1,741,077. In Sussex County, FEMA will pay \$1,307,107, or 75 percent of the projects costs that totaled \$1,742,809.

FEMA has obligated more than \$88 million in public assistance funds for debris removal since Hurricane Isabel struck in September.

## On the move...



**Dan Joyce** has accepted the Emergency Analyst position in the Office of the Regional Director.



**Robin Danforth** has accepted a Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Specialist position in the Federal Insurance and Mitigation Division.



**Mark Beto** has accepted an Emergency Management Specialist position in the Response and Recovery Division.